



EU and Australia discuss cooperation on a range of development issues

On 6 February 2019, the EU and Australia discussed stepping up their joint efforts in a number of development areas during their latest Development Dialogue in Brussels.

This was the third Development Dialogue (previous sessions were held in 2015 and 2017) and the first since the provisional entry into force of the Australia-EU Framework Agreement.

The Dialogue was co-chaired by Mr Stefano Manservigi, Director-General of the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO) and Ms Clare Walsh, Deputy Secretary at the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). Also at the meeting were officials from DFAT, the European Commission and the European External Action Service.

The Dialogue enabled both sides to emphasise their strong commitment to the international rules-based order, and to supporting the international norms and institutions that support security, growth and development and promote collective responses to global challenges. They agreed to continue their work together at all levels to ensure multilateral development organisations remain fit-for-purpose and responsive to the increasingly diverse challenges.

The two sides noted the substantial economic and strategic shifts underway in the Indo-Pacific region. The Australian side outlined a range of its new initiatives that were designed as partnerships with Pacific island countries. They two sides agreed on the importance of strengthening their cooperation and coordination on sustainable development in the region. They discussed a number of possible opportunities to support investments in areas of shared interest and agreed to further dialogue.

They discussed their respective approaches to infrastructure financing and connectivity. The EU outlined the Commission's EU-Asia Connectivity Strategy and the need to combine sustainable investments with policy and institutional reforms. Australia outlined its trilateral cooperation with Japan and the US on infrastructure investment in the Indo-Pacific and the announcement of the establishment of the Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific. The two sides noted the synergies between Australian and EU policies and agreed to actively explore scope for further cooperation, including on gender equality and ending violence against women and girls.

They exchanged views on ways to ensure effective and sustained engagement by the private sector in development. They exchanged experiences on budget support and agreed to work together in delivering innovative forms of development finance.

They agreed to work closely to support partner countries to implement the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to support Pacific countries to adapt and mitigate climate change.

The co-chairs agreed to hold the next development dialogue in Australia by 2020.